

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT**

### **APRIL 15, 2009 COMMISSION MEETING**

Meeting Location: New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301.

Commissioners Present: E. Orff, R. Phillipson, R. Rowan, T. Tichy, P. Costa, J. Ryan, T. Hubert, and W. Morse

Commissioners absent: M. Kalter, S. Guaraldi

Coastal Commissioner: vacant

Executive Director Normandeau - present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the chairman, may speak on any item on the agenda.

He announced the passing of John I. Nelson, former Chief, Marine Division. He reported that John was a longtime friend, employee, and supporter of the Department. He asked everyone join in a moment of silence.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Commissioner Hubert moved to approve the April 15, 2009 Commission minutes and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.
2. Chairman Phillipson and Director Normandeau presented the 2009 Commission Awards of Excellence as follows:

Chairman Phillipson announced that the Fish and Game Commission began this program to recognize the contributions that people and organizations in New Hampshire make toward achieving the mission of the Fish and Game Department.

The first award honored the category of Conservation Organization. The 2009 Commission Conservation Organization Award was presented to representatives from the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation. The Federation was nominated for this award based on their work to keep land open to hunting and fishing here in New Hampshire.

The second award was in the category of Volunteer. The recipient, Michael Morrison, of Swanzey, NH, was not able to attend due to a family medical emergency, however, will be receiving the 2009 Volunteer Commission Award of Excellence at the May 20, 2009 Commission Meeting.

The third award was in the category of Communication. The 2009 Communication Award of Excellence went to Robert C. Washburn, a columnist for the Concord Monitor and resident of Concord, NH. Mr. Washburn is a local favorite with readers, both hunters and non-hunters, for his interesting columns featuring the latest in wildlife happenings, equipment updates and stories about his time spent outdoors. Folks like Bob Washburn are key partners in communicating the results of the Department's work and promoting participation in hunting and fishing.

The fourth and final award presented was the 2009 Ellis R. Hatch Jr. Award of Excellence. The award was presented to H. Meade Cadot, Jr., from Hancock, NH. Meade Cadot has been a fixture in NH's conservation community since the early 1970's, as an educator, pioneer in land protection and communicator about the importance of protecting our state's rich natural heritage.

The Commission and audience applauded the above recipients for their accomplishments.

3. Commissioner Orff moved to approve items 3a- 3d as presented below and Commissioner Costa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

3a. Donation of \$300.00, \$200.00 from the Sullivan County Sportsmen and \$100.00 from Daniel and John Madden, to be utilized by the Landowner Relations Program.

3b. Payment of \$33.56 from Melissa Goodman, on behalf of Justin Goodman, for search & rescue efforts, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account.

3c. Donation of 25 digital scales from the NH Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, for use in turkey registration stations.

3d. Payment of \$311.25 from Peter & Marion Russo, on behalf of Pasquale Digiovangiacomo, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account.

4. Commissioner Hubert moved to approve going forward with rulemaking to develop a permit to allow the processing of lobster tails in New Hampshire and Commissioner Costa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5. Director Normandeau announced that he was looking to schedule a retreat for Senior Staff and Commission Members June 2 – 4, 2009, offsite with the Management Assistance Team. He requested that copies of the "Draft Handbook" be provided to all Division Chiefs for their review and input.

Commissioner Rowan reported that he has received no input from Senior Staff to date and hoped that responses were better than past opportunities.

At this time, Commissioner Rowan moved that copies of the updated Commission Handbook be provided to Senior Staff for their review and input and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Director Normandeau stated the importance of a unified handbook.

Bill Carney, former Merrimack County Commissioner, stated that it was time to get the handbook accepted and into policy as it was part of the audit findings to address it.

Further, Commissioner Ryan moved that a final vote would be taken on the updated Commission Handbook at the June 17, 2009 Commission Meeting and Commissioner Costa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**LATE ACTION ITEM:**

1. Commissioner Rowan moved to accept a search and rescue payment of \$311.25 from Cheryl Vincent, on behalf of Dean Cooper, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1. Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Support Services, read the monthly Financial Statement dated March 31, 2009. (See attached statement)

2. Judy Stokes, Chief, Public Affairs Division, reported on the results of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation direct mail marketing program and preview of this year's plan. She reported that in 2008, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department entered into a partnership with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. The partnership began as part of a national effort with thirty state fish and wildlife agencies to implement a new direct mail marketing program, targeting resident lapsed anglers to increase fishing license sales to stem off declining participation. Today, the partnership, which operates on a 50/50 cost-sharing model, now includes nearly 40 state fish and wildlife agencies.

Further, two mailings of 35,000 postcards in May 2008 and June 2008 encouraging lapsed and "new anglers" to renew their licenses. (See attached Lapsed Angler Results and New Angler Retention)

3. Steve Weber, Chief, Wildlife Division, provided a summary on the pheasant account balance and options. Steve stated, "The pheasant report indicates trouble on the horizon." Steve reported that the cost of pheasants have been increasing yearly. Much discussion ensued. Commissioner Phillipson stated that the fund balance came up at their Volunteer Pheasant Meeting and constituents were in favor of raising the license fee.

Commissioner Hubert moved to increase the license fee from \$15.00 to \$25.00 and Commissioner Rowan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Linda Dionne, Audience Member, read aloud the following letter:

*A defenseless animal raised in captivity is released from a cage, allowed to flee for a short distance and then shot. If it were a dog, this would be grounds for an animal cruelty charge. But the animal happens to be a bird, a pheasant, to be exact, and Fish and Game has exempted itself from the NH cruelty statute.*

*Some try to label this as a “sport”, however, many people do not consider this sport at all, I don’t, nor do my NHARL colleagues. Many hunters don’t see it as sportsmanlike as well. And this un-sportsmanlike act requires Fish & Game to spend thousands of dollars each year, so why does it continue? It’s no grand New Hampshire tradition nor does it have anything to do with managing a species, the usual excuse for hunting wildlife. Pheasants are not native to New Hampshire and based on these grounds alone, pheasant stocking does not fit with NH Fish and Game’s mission which states, “As the guardian of the state’s fish, wildlife, and marine resources, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department works in partnership with the public to provide the public with opportunities to use and appreciate these resources”. It is outside this mission to actually create an opportunity to hunt a species that is not a native NH wildlife species and which cannot survive in NH once it is released.*

*Fish and Game needs to put an end to pheasant stocking for two obvious reasons: ethical and economic. By doing so, Fish and Game will show that real steps are being taken to correct financial troubles by cutting costly programs. But more importantly, this simple decision will show that Fish and Game has chosen to act in accordance with its own mission statement.*

At this time, Director Normandeau provided the Director’s Report.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT:** Director Normandeau reported that SB-132, the merging of various department agencies, was headed to the House for vote. He reported that other agency heads were stunned as this was not expected or discussed. He stated that he would keep the Commission updated on the status.

He reported that discussion took place at the Governor & Council Meeting regarding Sunapee boat access. He stated that is seemed to be on the hot plate. He reported that the Department of Environmental Services has provided hearing dates and stated he was hopeful to keep the permit application process going. He reported that he informed the Governor & Council of the process and encouraged them to possibly hold a hearing of their own.

He further reported that some time ago Tom Thomson of the New Hampshire Timerland Owner’s Association, had some issues with state agency employees on their property. He reported that the Department of Environmental Services has derived a draft policy that involves notifying any property owner of coming on their land. He further stated that the Attorney General’s Office was in the process of researching the matter.

In addition, he reported that deliberations start Friday, April 17, 2009, regarding the Wind Park proposal and that a decision should be rendered within a week or two.

In closing, he reported that the department was authorized to purchase some much needed vehicles for Law Enforcement and Fish Hatcheries. He reported that to date 4 Ford plow trucks had been received and no General Motors products.

**STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**POLICY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner T. Hubert, Chair; Commissioners; Kalter, Orff, Costa, and Ryan. Commissioner Hubert reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission

Meeting. He reported that the group worked on Handbook Policies and stated that SB-132 was the topic of discussion.

Commissioner Hubert moved that the Commission oppose SB-132 as written and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Guaraldi, Chair; Commissioners Tichy, Rowan and Morse. Commissioner Guaraldi was absent, therefore, no report.

**RIVERS COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Morse; Commissioner Morse reported that the group discussed the Exeter River Management Plan. He further stated that there was much discussion relative to HB-2, which would sunset all boards. He stated that the Rivers Committee went on record as opposing the bill.

**LAKES COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Kalter; Commissioner Kalter was absent, therefore, no report.

**HANDBOOK COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Rowan, Chair; Commissioner's Kalter and Orff. Commissioner Rowan reported that he covered the handbook material earlier in the meeting.

**AWARDS COMMITTEE:** Commissioners Guaraldi, Tichy, Orff, Kalter, and staff members: Colonel Garabedian, Judy Stokes, Chief, Public Affairs Division, and Donna Preve, Administrative Secretary. The committee did not meet this month.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The Commission questioned as to when the Wildlife Division would be working on getting proper signage up at Wildlife Management Areas and other department owned lands. Steve Weber reported that most properties are marked somehow, although stated that there was a lot more to be done. He stated that he would get back to the Commission with more detailed information.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:**

**COMMISSIONER HUBERT:** Commissioner Hubert reported that he had been informing constituents of the Wild Goose Boat Ramp issues. He reported the Sullivan and Cheshire County Fish and Game Clubs presented Ted Walski, Wildlife Biologist, with a framed beagle print for working with the groups on the Volunteer Pheasant Stocking Program. Ted was very appreciative. He reported that the Lake Sunapee Protective Association has put much effort into preventing access at the Wild Goose site. He encouraged everyone to get his or her constituents involved and be heard. In closing, he inquired as to the status of the bobcat research project. Steve Weber reported that he would have a presentation prepared for the May 20, 2009 Commission Meeting.

**COMMISSIONER GUARALDI:** Commissioner Guaraldi was absent, therefore, no report. Banquet.

**COMMISSIONER RYAN:** Commissioner Ryan reported that he attended the Hunter Education Volunteer Recognition Banquet and the Let's Go Fishing Volunteer Banquet and met some interesting people. He reported that his Outreach Meeting on April 8, 2009, at the Urban Forestry Center was not

very well attended. He reported that Lieutenant Wimsatt did attend and was able to answer questions and provide information, which was very beneficial.

**COMMISSIONER ROWAN:** Commissioner Rowan reported that he attended the Hunter Education Volunteer Recognition Banquet and the Let's Go Fishing Volunteer Banquet. He stated that he was amazed at the number of volunteers and their dedication. He further reported that he attended the Winnepesaukee Sportsmen's Meeting, where they informed him that a petition was underway to put access on the KONA Wildlife Management Area. In closing, he reported that he attended the Legislative Audit Meeting and has been circulating Wild Goose petitions.

**COMMISSIONER ORFF:** Commissioner Orff reported that he attended the Hunter Education Volunteer Recognition Banquet, The Wildlife Federation Banquet, Moose Mountain Greenway Meeting, Audubon Society Meeting, and Mastering Agency Change Meetings.

**COMMISSIONER MORSE:** Commissioner Morse reported that he attended the Hunter Education Recognition Banquet. He further reported that he taught the handgun portion of a Hunter Education Course this month and had a great time.

**COMMISSIONER COSTA:** Commissioner Costa reported that she attended the Hunter Education Volunteer Recognition Banquet and was pleased to see the number of vendors there. She further reported that she attended the Wildlife Federation Banquet. She reported that she has been in contact with Jim, of the Barnstead Conservation Commission, to address the potential for clearing adequate access to Lilly Pond. It seems there is a floating mass of vegetation, which is making it difficult for people to get in there with canoes. In closing, she reported that she received a call from Story's Sportshop, formerly Martell's, stating that they had a petition signed with signatures to show support for them becoming a deer check/weigh-in station. She asked that whom-ever reviews these applications or requests to contact the shop with more information. In closing, she reported that she would be attending the Pointer Fish and Game Club's Annual Dinner on Thursday, April 16, 2009.

**COMMISSIONER TICHY:** Commissioner Tichy reported that calls have been somewhat minimal. He reported that he did receive a few regarding baitfish and the bobcat surveys. He further reported that he would be attending the Androscoggin Valley Fish and Game Banquet on Thursday, April 16, 2009 in Berlin.

**COMMISSIONER KALTER:** Commissioner Kalter was absent, therefore, no report.

**COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON:** Commissioner Phillipson reported that he attended the Mastering Agency Change workshops. He reported that he attended a "Sportsmens Caucus" and was happy to report that New Hampshire was the 38<sup>th</sup> State to join. He reported that the focus was to have a non-partisan group of both the House & Senate who have common goals of sportsmen's interests and protecting the sporting rights of the State of New Hampshire. Further, he reported that his liaison meeting was cancelled due to lack of attendance. In closing, he reported that the "Women on Target" class would be held on May 16, 2009 and stated, "The class is full".

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Linda Rauter, Audience Member, read the following letter aloud:

*As a resident of New Hampshire and a citizen who is very concerned about the humane treatment of animals, I am writing to express my extreme opposition to the practice of pheasant stocking.*

*As you know, young, farm-raised pheasants are trucked to New Hampshire from out-of-state. After a long, stressful trip, they are dumped unceremoniously at various sites around the state, often in places where hunters already arrived. The shooting begins as the birds scatter in fear. The “lucky” ones are killed outright. Many eventually starve, or are killed by dogs or vehicles. They have no survival skills as they are raised on farms. I believe they are not even a bird that is native to New Hampshire. What kind of “fair hunt” is this?*

*I also understand that the pheasant- stocking program loses money for the department. The birds are expensive to purchase and transport. This program makes no sense at all, either financially or morally, and should be stopped immediately.*

Steve Weber announced that the Pheasant Program does pay all of its costs and that the department is not concerned that the program is not self sustaining at this point.

Eric Rottenecker, Audience Member, provided a brief presentation relative to bears located in the Alexandria, Bridgewater, Bristol, and Plymouth area. The information he obtained was provided by Mark Ellingwood, Wildlife Supervisor, and is referred to in the Wildlife Harvest Summary.

After the presentation, Commissioner Tichy responded, “We do not mico-manage, we have biologist that bring that information to the Commission and we rely on those professionals to make these types of decisions.”

At this time, 3:54 p.m., Commissioner Costa moved to adjourn and Commissioner Ryan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Costa, Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Phillipson, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_